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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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SEP 24 2003

Technology Center 2600

RESPONSE

Sir:

Since the Patent Office was closed Thursday, September 18, 2003 through Sunday, September 21, 2003, no extension fees are due.

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the above-identified application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-24 remain pending.

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication that claims 7-9, 12, 19-21 and 24 include allowable subject matter. However, claims 1-6, 10, 11, 13-18, 22 and 23 are rejected under U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,108,561 to Mallinckrodt et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,219,343 to Honkasalo et al. This rejection is respectfully